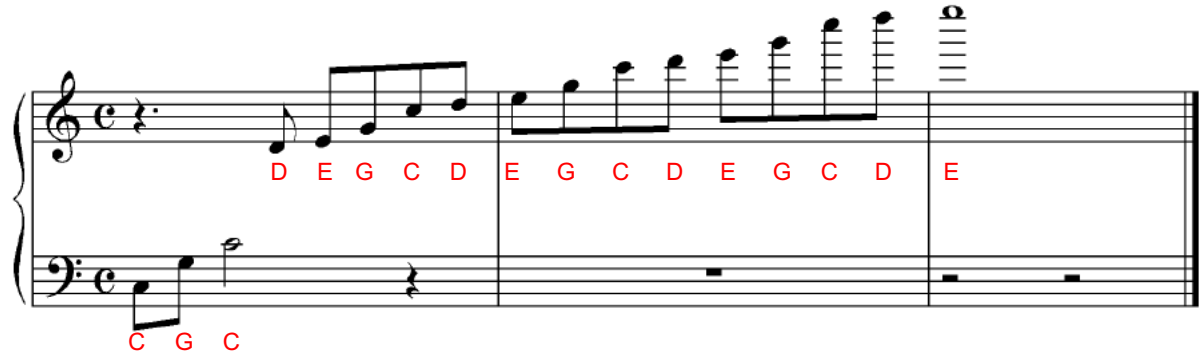
IMPROVISING BALLAD STYLE

EXERCISE 5. MOVING BEYOND THE ‘SAFE’ NOTES

When you feel comfortable using your ‘safe’ note in a variety of ways - experiment further by adding in more variety or more notes.

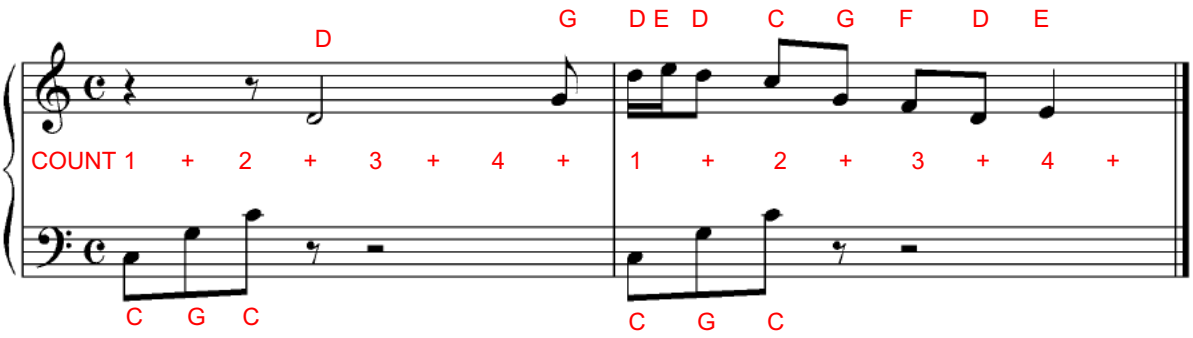
1. RUNS

Continue your ‘safe’ notes up the piano for two or more octaves



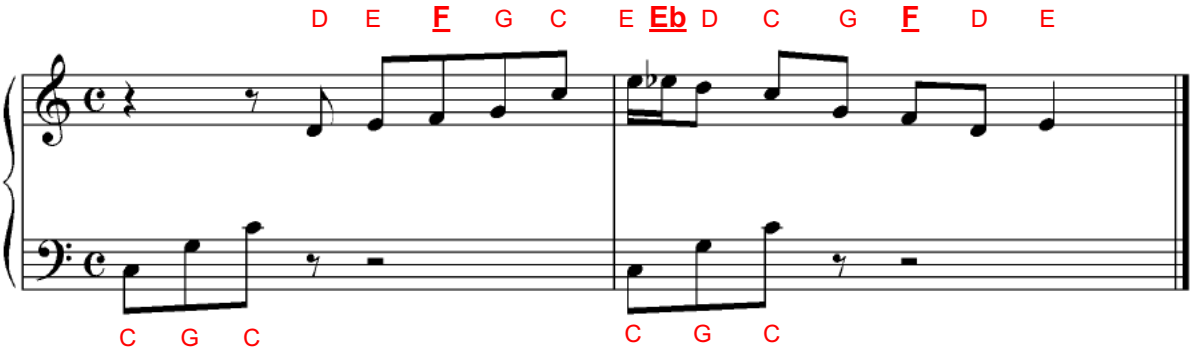
2. VARIATION IN NOTE DURATION

Up to now the examples have all used 8 half beats per bar. Try to vary the duration of the notes. Make use of periods of silence or use quarter notes to add little moments or excitement.



3. PASSING NOTES

These are notes that are used ‘outside’ of chord tones either to add ‘colour’ or to connect chord tones in a more interesting way.



IMPROVISING BALLAD STYLE

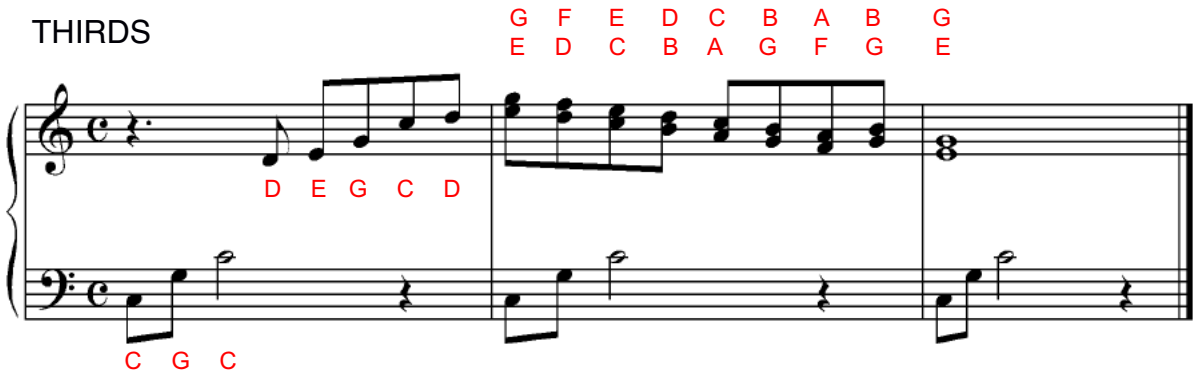
4. DOUBLE UP ON NOTES WITH THIRDS, SIXTHS OR OCTAVES.

If you add another note to each melody note it creates a nice ‘ringing’ sound. Add the extra note BENEATH the melody note (the top note is the one our ears pick out).

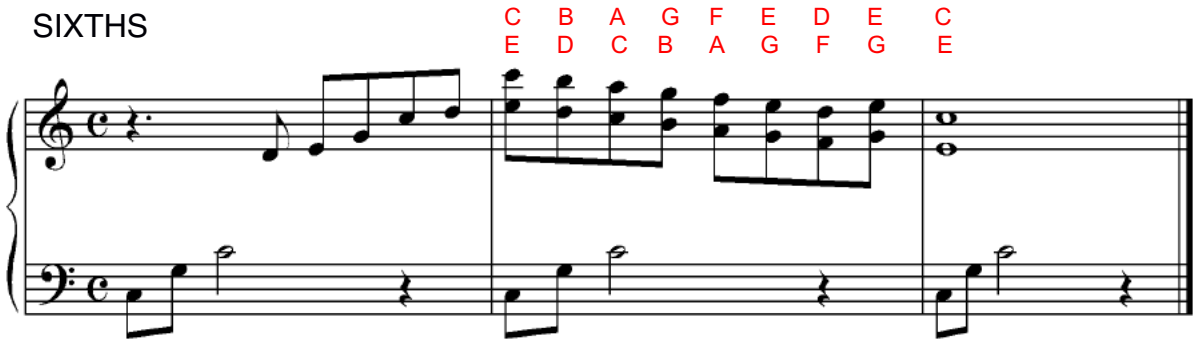
Stick to notes of the key you are playing in (ie the white notes in C major).
A ‘third’ is a note three scale tones away (ie C - E or D - F)
A ‘sixth’ is a note six scale tones away (ie C - A or F - D)

We use Thirds and Sixths or Octaves because they work more consistently with more notes in the scale. However, they don’t ALWAYS sound right with every tone - use your own judgement.

THIRDS



SIXTHS



OCTAVES